

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 DAMASC 00029 111435Z
ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 INR-07 MC-02 ACDA-07
AID-05 IGA-02 EB-07 TRSE-00 /057 W
-----111454Z 005219 /43

R 111413Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1267
INFO DIA WASHDC
USCINCEUR
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 029

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MMOL, ESTC, SY
SUBJECT: SYRIAN ARMY INTEREST IN U.S. OR EUROPEAN COMMO EQUIPMENT

REFS: USDAO DAMASCUS 003/041320Z JAN 77, IR 6 891 0004 77

1. EMBASSY ECON/COMM OFFICER VISITED SYRIAN BUSINESSMAN
GEORGE ABDINI REFERENCED MESSAGE IN FOLLOW-UP TO ABDINI'S
APPROACH TO AMBASSADOR AND DATT ON POSSIBLE PURCHASE BY
SYRIAN ARMY OF WESTERN (HOPEFULLY U.S.) COMMUNICATIONS
EQUIPMENT. ECONOFF PROVIDED ABDINI WITH LIST U.S.
MANUFACTURERS OF MILITARY COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT. ABDINI
WAS CAUTIONED THAT NO ONE COULD PROMISE THAT USG WOULD
REVERSE PRESENT POSITION AND ISSUE EXPORT LICENSES FOR

LARGE-SCALE SALES OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO SYRIA.

2. ABDINI STATED THAT GEM. MUFID HAWASH, CHIEF OF ARMY
SIGNALS, HAS JUST RETURNED FROM TRIP TO FRANCE, BELGIUM,
NETHERLANDS AND UK SHOPPING FOR COMMUNICATIONS EQUIP-
MENT. HAWASH, ACCORDING TO ABDINI'S SOURCE, HAS ALREADY
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DECIDED TO OPT FOR BRITISH EQUIPMENT AND HAS NEGOTIATED
CONTRACT WITH BRITISH FIRMS (INCLUDING COMISS ON).
HAWASH HAS NOW RETURNED TO DAMASCUS WITH COMPLETE
SHOPPING LIST AND HAS ASKED PRESIDENT FOR PERMISSION
TO PROCEED WITH NEGOTIATED CONTRACT. IF PRESIDENT
AGREES, DEAL IS WRAPPED UP FOR HAWASH; HOWEVER,
ASAD MAY INSIST ON OPEN TENDER IN WHICH CASE ABDINI

(AND U.S. FIRMS) STILL IN THE RUNNING.

3. AS BACKGROUND TO DEAL, ABDINI STATED HAWASH LED DELEGATION OF SENIOR SYRIAN OFFICERS TO SAUDI ARABIA LATE IN 1976. HE COMPLAINED TO SAUDIS THAT SOVIET COMMO EQUIPMNT SHODDY AND INADEQUATE. SAUDI PRINCE HASSAN BIN ABDUL AZAI ASKED SYRIANS WHY THEY DID NOT OBTAIN WESTERN EQUIPMENT AND HAWASH XPLAINED THEY LACKED THE MONEY. HASSAN ASKED HOW MUCH IT WOULD COST AND WAS TOLD \$300-400 MILLION. APPARENTLY HE TOLD HAWASH TO BUY IT AND SEND HIM THE BILL SO LONG AS IT WAS FROM A WESTERN COUNTRY. (ACCORDING TO ABDINI'S SOURCE, U.S. AND UK WERE ONLY MENTIONED AS EXAMPLES RATHR THAN RESTRICTING SALE TO THESE TWO COUNTRIES.)

4. IN CONTRADICTION TO REFTTEL, ABDINI DENIED HIS SOURCE WAS GENERAL AHWASH, STATING IT WAS A MUTUAL FRIEND. ABDINI STATED HAWASH HAS DRAWN UP COMPLET SHOPPING LIST, INCLUDING SPECS, BUT IS KEEPING IT TO HIMSELF. HE ASKED IF DATT COULD APPROACH HAWASH AND ASK HIM FOR COPY OF THE LIST. ECONOFF EXPRESSED HIS DOUBTS THAT DATT WOULD AGREE.
MURPHY

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Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 11-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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